

REMARKS

The present application has been carefully studied and amended in view of the outstanding Office Action dated March 12, 2003, and reconsideration of that Action is requested in view of the following comments.

A petition for a three-month extension of time accompanies this response together with the appropriate fee. Accordingly, the deadline for responding to the Office Action has been extended until September 12, 2003, and this response is therefore timely filed since it was deposited in the mail for First Class Delivery Service on the date certified on the front page hereof.

With respect to the rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 USC §112, applicant submits the following.

With respect to the Shore A hardness, claim 1 has been amended to make it absolutely clear that such hardness refers to the modified styrene-olefin elastomer. Support is found in the specification at page 8, lines 35-36 and page 9, lines 22-24.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the objection to the term "high molecular weight" particularly because the specification identifies EP-A-710703 and EP-A-699519 at page 8, lines 22-23, and each of these disclosures has been incorporated by reference. On page 3, lines 49-50 of EP-A-699519, the apparent molecular weight of the total block polymer is defined as being in the range of from 20, 000 to 350,000.

With respect to the recited percentage limitations of the styrene-olefin block copolymer and the non-olefinic thermoplastic material, the reasons these percentages do not compute to 100% is that other additives may be included such as lubricating plasticizers, inorganic fillers and pigments. These additives are described in the

specification at page 9, lines 26-31, for example. Moreover, claim 1 recites that he composition “comprises” the styrene-olefin block polymer and the non-olefinic thermoplastic material as well as lubricating plasticizer and/or inorganic filler.

Accordingly, for the reasons discussed above and the amendment to claim 1 it is believed that claims 1-9 are in proper form and in full compliance with 35 USC §112.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-12 define an invention which is nether disclosed nor suggested by the prior art taken alone or in combination with one another. Specifically, claims 1-9 are not rendered obvious by EP-A-837097 (“EP ‘097”) and claims 10-12 are not rendered obvious by DE-C-4434656 (“DE ‘656”), for the reasons discussed below.

EP ‘097 describes specific block copolymers and their use for improving the compatibility of polymer blends and the adhesion of non-polar thermoplastic elastomers (TPE e.g. SEBS) onto polar engineering resins, where a number of materials are mentioned including polyacetals. The block copolymer used as a compatibilizer contains (a) a chemically modified polyolefin, (b) a thermoplastic polyurethane, copolyester or copolyamide, and (c) a coupling agent.

A few examples illustrate the improved adhesion of a thermoplastic elastomer (PP/EP DM DVA) blended with the block copolymer compatibilizer (page 12, table V) onto an engineering resin, e.g. ABS. where sheets of both materials had been pressed together in a hot press (page 9, lines 27-29). Specific examples with polyacetals are not mentioned.

According to the teaching of EP ‘097 it is necessary to apply the additional block copolymer to achieve the improved compatibility or adhesion. In contrast thereto

according to the present invention such complicated block copolymers are not necessary but merely a compound comprising SEBS and a non-olefinic thermoplastic elastomer. In particular the SEBS-compounds used in the present invention do not comprise a modified polyolefin.

In summary EP '097 differs from the claimed invention herein because a composite article made from polyacetals and from a specific SEBS compound is neither described nor suggested.

DE '656 describes moldings produced by multicomponent injection molding from thermoplastics and a sound-deadening sheath made from thermoplastic elastomers. A wide variety of materials is given both for the thermoplastic elastomers and for the thermoplastics which can be used, and these include styrene-olefin elastomers and POM.

However, in contrast to the invention defined in the present claims, the bond in the DE '656 moldings is produced mechanically by interlocks (see 24 in Figure 1; column 3, lines 61-68). Nowhere is mentioned that the bond between the hard and the soft component is due to the composition of the elastomer. A hint for this thesis is given by claim 3 where SEBS is used which as known shows no adhesion to POM.

The publication does not give specific information for using these particular materials together or give advantages of a combination of this type.

In summary, in view of EP '097 and DE '656 no teaching can be found which makes the present invention obvious to someone skilled in the art.

Accordingly, for the reasons discussed above it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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